

## Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie

Jordan Sonnenblick

This book was written by Jordan Sonnenblick in 2004. The book revolves around the life story of Steven Alper and the events that occur during his 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. He has a little brother who is diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. Of course, this has a profound effect on Steven. The book goes through the trials of Steven's life and the awkwardness of beginning to like girls. It is full of teenage humor and sarcasm but also portrays how a teenage boy deals with his brother's cancer, home life (family-parents), school life, and hormones. Steven is good on the drums, pretends to despise his adorable little brother, and learns some of life's harder lessons all while dealing with his personal 'love' life. At first glance, the title of the book doesn't make sense but as the story unfolds, the title is appropriate and descriptive of the storyline.

The book revolves around the main plot of Steven's teenage life trials with girls and his family, as well as his little brother's cancer diagnosis. The main characters are Steven, his little brother Jeffrey, his crush Renee, his friend (Annette) that has a crush on Steven, his parents and a girl he meets at the hospital, Samantha. Each character adds their own view on Steven's dilemma with dealing with his cancer-stricken brother.

Steven is your typical average teenage boy in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Not a bad looking kid, but not the hottest boy in school. He is awesome at the drums and it gives him a popularity vote. While Steven pretends to abhor his little brother, he secretly loves and adores him as well. Jeffrey is a very cute, adorable, and small in stature, 5 year old boy with blond hair. He has a cute disposition and knows everyone finds him adorable. Jeffrey thinks his brother is a rock star and admires him immensely. Renee is the hottest girl in school and lives around the corner from Steven and his family. Renee is also Steven's crush but Steven doesn't know how to approach

her as a boy who likes a girl. Annette is Steven's friend who is considered a little nerdy because she is super smart and well-spoken. She has a secret crush on Steven but they have always had classes together. Samantha is a girl that Steven meets in the hospital who has cancer like his little brother. Even though Samantha plays a small role in Steven's life, her appearance leaves an impact on him.

The setting varies but typically stays in the area around his home town. The settings are his school, his house, his grandparent's house, and occasionally the hospital where his brother receives his treatments. The setting generally follows a typical day's routine of waking up and dealing with his family, going to school, going to his grandparents' house for a break from the hospital, and then sometimes the hospital.

The issues that Steven deals with initially are focused on drums and girls. As Steven becomes a better drum player and gains confidence, he begins to think more about girls, particularly his crush, Renee. Steven's worries included how to read women, which he doesn't understand but is inexplicably drawn to. When Steven learns that his brother has cancer, his demeanor changes and he grows through the experiences related to cancer and becoming responsible.

Overall, the book provides insight to a typical teenage boy's life with atypical circumstances mixed in. The book uses a stereotypical sarcastic response and view of things (much expected responses from a teenage boy) but also provides insight into the thoughtfulness and impact that serious dilemmas present. I can definitely relate to this story because I have had to deal with cancer in my family as well and I have a 13 year old son that had to see his brother go through cancer treatments as well. Although it is not uncommon these days to have someone

deal with cancer, it is a good book to read to try to gain insight to how a teenage boy views things.